

REMARKS:

- 1) This is applicants' Second Response to the Final Office Action of May 21, 2003, because the first Response of July 21, 2003 was not entered, as indicated in the Advisory Action of August 27, 2003. In a Telephone Interview on September 2, 2003, the Examiner further discussed the clarity issues of the previously proposed amended claims and agreed to consider a further revised Amendment and Response, which is appreciated. The present Amendment in this Second Response is in conformance with the Telephone Interview.
- 2) Referring to item 10 of the Office Action Summary of the Final Office Action, the Examiner is respectfully requested to approve the formal drawing that was originally filed with this application on March 16, 2001.
- 3) Entry and consideration of the present amendments and remarks after Final are respectfully requested. These amendments and remarks are directly responsive to the issues raised for the first time in the Final Office Action based on the new grounds of rejection. This is applicant's first opportunity to reply to those new grounds of rejection. The present amendments place the application into condition for allowance based on the indicated allowable subject matter, without raising any new issues that would require additional consideration or a new search.

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- 4) Referring to section 7 on page 5 of the Office Action, the allowance of claims 19 to 21 is appreciated. Those claims are maintained without amendment and should still stand allowed.
- 5) Referring to section 6 on page 5 of the Office Action, the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 7 to 9 is appreciated. The features of claims 7 and 9 have been incorporated as alternative limitations into present amended independent claim 1. Claim 1 now requires that the at least one crosslinked elastomer comprises at least one of the first blend elastomers (according to claim 7) and the second blend elastomers (according to claim 9). Thus, claim 1 has been limited to the allowable subject matter and should now be allowable. Claims 7 and 9 have been maintained, individually reciting the alternatives of amended claim 1, namely that the elastomer must comprise at least one first blend elastomer according to claim 7, or must comprise at least one second blend elastomer according to claim 9. Dependent claims 3 and 6 have been amended for proper conformance with the amended independent claim. In several claims, the term "at least one elastomer" has been changed to --at least one crosslinked elastomer-- for improved clarity and antecedent consistency. For these reasons, independent claim 1 and claims 3 to 18 depending therefrom should now be allowable.
- 6) Referring to sections 4 and 5 on pages 2 to 5 of the Office Action, the prior art rejections have been obviated by the incorporation of the allowable subject matter of claims 7 and 9

into independent claim 1. Thus, the prior art rejections cannot be maintained and should be withdrawn.

- 7) Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application, including all claims 1 and 3 to 21, are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Applicant

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Term Extension,  
Form PTO-2038

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CERTIFICATE OF FAX TRANSMISSION:

I hereby certify that this correspondence with all indicated enclosures is being transmitted by telefax to (703) 872-9306 on the date indicated below, and is addressed to: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D. C. 20231.

Walter F. Fasse 9/12/03  
Name: Walter F. Fasse - Date: September 12, 2003

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